

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NEA-10 SIG-01 SS-15
NSC-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00
ACDA-07 IO-13 /087 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:JWHITING:CJ/IW
APPROVED BY AF/WESCHAUFLE, JR.
AF/E RSPOST
EUR/CE:KKURZE
NEA/ARP:FGERLACH
PM:RERICSON

-----232259Z 098742 /66

P R 232233Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T STATE 092304

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, US, ET, SO, SU, SA

SUBJEC,: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH FRG CONCERNING HORN OF
AFRICA.

REF: BONN 06497

1. DEPT SHARES FONOFFS DESIRE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. YOU MAY USE THE
FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS AND SAY THAT WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER
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SUCH EXCHANGES.

2. WE HAVE JUST COMPLETED A REVIEW OF OUR POLICY IN THE
AREA--A REVIEW WHICH IS CONTINUING AT A HIGH LEVEL AS
EVENTS UNFOLD THERE. THE THRUST OF OUR POLICY IS BASED ON:
(1) OUR RECOGNITION OF THE INEVITABILITY OF THE DETERIO-
RATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE PRESENT ETHIOPIAN

PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (EPMG) AND THE NEED TO TAILOR OUR RELATIONSHIP ACCORDINGLY; (2) OUR DETERMINATION TO STRENGTHEN OUR TIES WITH KENYA AND SUDAN; AND (3) OUR DESIRE TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA. AS DOES FRG, WE SEE A CHANCE TO REDUCE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA AND ARE TAKING ACTIONS TO TRY TO BRING THIS ABOUT. AS EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND SUDAN SHARE OUR INTEREST AND CAN PLAY CRUCIAL ROLES WITH REGARD TO SOMALIA, WE HAVE BEEN CONSULTING WITH THEM.

3. SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA'S HEREDITARY ETHIOPIAN ENEMY HAS CLEARLY ANGERED THE SOMALIS, AND HAS PROMPTED THEM TO LOOK TO THE WEST AND TO MODERATE ARAB STATES TO FACILITATE A LESSENING OF THEIR DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR. IN SEEKING TO EFFECT A CHANGE IN SOMALIA'S ORIENTATION WE BELIEVE THAT WE MUST MOVE CAREFULLY AND AT A DELIBERATE PACE. THE OVERWHELMING PRESENCE IN SOMALIA OF 2500 SOVIET ADVISORS, AT THE BERBERA BASE, IN THE SOMALIA MILITARY, BUT ALSO SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE MINISTRIES, WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR PRESIDENT SIAD TO SHIFT HIS POLICY QUICKLY. BECAUSE OF SOMALIA'S RELIANCE ON SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SOMALIA'S CONCERNS WITH ETHIOPIA, NON-SOVIET SOURCES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WILL BE OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO SOMALIA. THE SOMALIS HAVE INDICATED TO US THEY WANT BOTH U.S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WE ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE SOME ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND TO DISPATCH AN ECONOMIC SURVEY MISSION TO EXAMINE SOMALI NEEDS. THE SOMALIS APPARENTLY EXPECT SIGNIFICANT SAUDI ECONOMIC SUPPORT. AS FOR MILITARY AID TO SOMALIA, WE BELIEVE THAT UNDER THE PROPER CONDITIONS WESTERN ARMS SHOULD BE SOLD TO
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SOMALIA BUT THE US BY ITSELF CANNOT OFFER AN ADEQUATE ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOVIETS. WE ARE NOW ENGAGED IN A WORLD-WIDE ARMS POLICY REVIEW AND ARE NOT IN A POSITION AT THE MOMENT TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS TO SOMALIA.

4. WITH REGARD TO ETHIOPIA, THE LEFTWARD LEANING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION THERE HAS SERIOUSLY DESTABILIZED THE POLITICAL BALANCE IN THE HORN. THE EPMG CLEARLY SEEKS CLOSE TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR TRADITIONALLY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. AFTER HESITATING FOR TWO YEARS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA OFFERED BY THE ACCESSION TO POWER OF THE LEFTIST EPMG, THE SOVIETS IN DECEMBER OFFERED TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA. THUS FAR THE SOVIETS AND THE EAST EUROPEANS HAVE SENT 30 T-34 TANKS AND SOME CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY. THE USSR APPARENTLY CONCLUDED, PERHAPS ERRONEOUSLY, THAT THE POSSIBLE RISKS TO THEIR MILITARY-STRATEGIC POSITION IN

SOMALIA WERE MANAGEABLE AND WERE, IN ANY CASE, OUTWEIGHED BY THE POLITICO-STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUING THE TREND OF SOVIET GAINS IN AFRICA BY OBTAINING A PREDOMINANT POSITION IN ETHIOPIA, THE SECOND MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN AFRICA, THE OAU HEADQUARTERS SITE,

AND THE POSSESSOR OF A SKILLED CADRE OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL BUILT UP DURING A QUARTER CENTURY OF U.S. ASSISTANCE.

5. WITH OUR KAGNEW STATION COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY NO LONGER IMPORTANT (AND SOON TO BE CLOSED) AND OUR ABILITY TO USE ETHIOPIA'S PORTS AND AIRFIELDS COMPROMISED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE EPMG, ETHIOPIA HAS LOST ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO US. AT THE SAME TIME OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA HAS DETERIORATED SHARPLY, TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN SOVIET INFLUENCE HAS
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INCREASED. AS THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY (NOW FIGHTING ERITREAN AND OTHER SECESSIONISTS AND PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH SOMALIA) IS LARGELY US-SUPPLIED, THE EPMG REGARD MILITARY MATERIEL AS THE KEY TO OUR RELATIONSHIP. OUR MILITARY SUPPORT OF ETHIOPIA HAS BEEN GREATLY LIMITED IN THE LAST TEN MONTHS. WE ARE DELAYING DELIVERIES OF LETHAL MATERIAL. BECAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WE HAVE PRECLUDED ANY FURTHER GRANT MAP MATERIEL ASSISTANCE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH WORLDWIDE REDUCTIONS, OUR MAAG MISSION IS BEING CUT. THE PROSPECTS ARE FOR A CONTINUING DETERIORATION OF US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS.

6. THE FORTHCOMING JUNE 27 INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI COULD TRIGGER CONFLICT BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA NOT ONLY IN THE TERRITORY BUT ALONG THE CONTESTED BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO, PARTICULARLY IN THE OGADEN. IN PURSUIT OF OUR OBJECTIVE OF SEEING DJIBOUTI MAKE A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE (WHICH WOULD BE ENHANCED BY A CONTINUING FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE) WE WILL OPEN A CONSULATE GENERAL THERE ON APRIL 25. GIVEN SOVIET CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THEIR FACILITIES AT BERBERA AND THEIR GROWING PROSPECTS IN ETHIOPIA, WE BELIEVE THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO SHARE OUR DESIRE FOR AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO.

7. WE WOULD WELCOME THE FRG'S VIEWS ON THE HORN SITUATION,
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, INFORMATION EXCHANGE, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE092304
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JWHITING:CJ/IW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770142-1128
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770425/aaaaavlb.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 37e716a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BONN 6497
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2712322
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC:: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH FRG CONCERNING HORN OF AFRICA.
TAGS: PFOR, US, ET, SO, SU, SA, UR
To: BONN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/37e716a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009